

**FORUM:** Sustainable Development Commission 1

**QUESTION OF:** Battling Rising Sea Levels: Saving the Pacific Island Small States

**SUBMITTED BY:** Chad

**CO-SUBMITTERS:** Liechtenstein, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, El Salvador, Argentina, Belgium, Gambia, Samoa, Bolivia, UNEP, Turkmenistan, France, Belize, Malta, Vietnam, Palau, Marshall Islands, Togo, Equatorial Guinea

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION,

*Defines*, climate change as continuous, long-term shifts in the interconnected weather patterns of the earth, primarily driven by human action,

*Disturbed* by the fact that parts of the western Pacific see a rise of 8 to 12 millimeters in sea level per year and areas of said region could become uninhabitable by 2030,

*Expressing with appreciation* the measures of Australia and New Zealand as Pacific Island Forum Members for developing the Pacific Labour Scheme as well as a system called the Pacific Access Ballot which allows for a certain number of citizens from PSIDS to resettle in New Zealand each year,

*Noting with concern* that the Paris Agreement's goal is to keep a global temperature rise in the 21st century under 2 degrees Celsius, and aiming to limit this increase to 1.5 degrees is not sufficient to achieve this due to the current country-level commitments to the goal,

*Acknowledging* that coral reefs help prevent flooding by breaking waves, yet the atolls in PSIDS are increasingly suffering from coral bleaching, making PSIDS more susceptible to the effects of flooding,

*Further alarmed* by the countries which did not sign, ratify or have withdrawn from the Paris Agreement as it destabilizes collective efforts of the engaged states targeting the reduction of global carbon emissions,

*Noting with deep concern*, that 55% of the Pacific region's population is located less than 1km from the sea, increasing the vulnerability of citizens against the rapid effects of sea rise such as natural disasters and displacement,

1. Supports the adoption of stricter legislation in accordance with the goals initially set forth by member nations such as in The Paris Agreement of 2015 through collaboration between several existing bodies such as:
  - a) The UN-affiliated organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and national governments to create and monitor bilateral and multilateral environmental agreements in order to tackle cross-border environmental disputes such as but not limited to:
    - i. atmospheric and freshwater policies
    - ii. the marine environment and nature policies
    - iii. nuclear safety
    - iv. noise pollution;
  - b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to change the status of The Paris Agreement to 'legally binding,' and enforce this by:
    - i. imposing an across-the-board carbon tax on all nations that are unable to meet their target after a five-year time period
    - ii. imploring the more economically developed countries that are unable to meet their targets to provide funds and aid for the committee's objectives
    - iii. monitoring the effectiveness of policies adopted by countries and the goals set forth within The Paris Agreement by making strategic and thematic evaluations, operational assessments of the management interest, and impact and influence

- based evaluations;
  - c) National governments to:
    - i. adopt policies as highlighted by The Paris Agreement into the national law and provide an annual report of their effectiveness to the aforementioned UN-affiliated organizations
    - ii. collaborate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to learn how to best utilise the renewable resources available within the region
    - iii. incorporate education on climate change in all schools' syllabi so that all children are aware of the dangers, such as the rising sea levels, that the world currently faces;
  - d) Various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the UNEP to carry out a large scale digital-media campaign to spread awareness regarding the issue of climate change in order to encourage the compliance of people and private companies with the limits set within national and international law;
- 2. Urges the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to create an ad hoc committee, with all members of the Pacific Island Forum and other relevant nations, responsible for the development of a plan of action for the climate change refugees that may arise due to the loss of certain island states, that:
  - a) creates a clear definition of the term 'environmentally displaced person' and 'climate refugee' that takes into account any and all matters of environmental concern that result in forced displacement
  - b) collaborates with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) to gather data and make predictions regarding areas most vulnerable to disaster
  - c) includes a first response system supported by the UNHCR that transcends political borders in the case of a climate-related disaster with measures such as but not limited to:
    - i. a toll-free helpline that caters specifically to regions most vulnerable to rising sea levels
    - ii. the creation of a disaster management team in order to provide immediate assistance to those in danger
    - iii. keeping records of and creating identity cards for all those residing within said vulnerable regions in order to ease the process of migration from one political unit to another
    - iv. the development of a transportation system in the case where evacuation of the entire island may be necessary
    - v. assuring the security of the climate migrants through assistance from the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) if any threat to their security occurs;
  - d) includes the identification of nations and organisations such as the Human Rights Watch (HRW) willing to house and provide humanitarian aid to these climate refugees while:
    - i. using 'Concrete Canvas Shelter' as a means of housing refugees
    - ii. identifying both temporary and permanent safe zones, should the refugees wish to remain there, for the immediate evacuation of the people of the PSIDS;
  - e) adopts measures for the easy integration of refugees into the new countries and cultures such as but not limited to:
    - i. awareness and preparatory programs that educate the people of the need to relocate in order to curb the rise of cultural barriers against migration
    - ii. expanding upon schemes such as the Pacific Labor Scheme to ensure employment and integration of refugees in the new communities
    - iii. creating dialogue across borders between the people of the states that are members of the PIF to integrate cultures through exchange trips in schools, digital media campaigns, subsidised travel options etc.;
- 3. Recommends adopting preventive measures for seawater contamination of groundwater such as but not limited to:

- a) monitoring salinity of groundwater and comparing it to the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for drinking-water quality using methods such as the U-Tube, the piper quadrilateral diagram, electrical conductivity, dissolved solid measurement,
  - b) controlling the salt-water intrusion in these identified areas by employing methods specific to the said regions such as but not limited to changing the pumping pattern, artificial recharge, extraction barrier, injection barrier, subsurface barrier,
  - c) adopting a legal framework of policies emphasising the importance of groundwater in order to ensure implementation of the aforementioned solutions;
4. Encourages collaboration between the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), specifically the atoll-dependent states, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Coral Reef Alliance and Coral Restoration Foundation to protect the reefs by:
- a) identifying the areas where coral reefs are at a high-risk of destruction and employing restoration methods such as but not limited to:
    - i. structural restoration methods such as construction of artificial reefs in areas where erosion is prevalent
    - ii. biological restoration methods such as culturing coral larvae and transplanting living coral colonies in areas where the coral suffer from bleaching, disease, etc.
    - iii. physical restoration methods such as creating mid-water coral nurseries to improve the conditions of the environment the corals reside in;
  - b) investing in research being conducted to find more effective methods of restoration
  - c) Creating awareness programs for the residents and tourists visiting these islands that include information regarding:
    - i. recycling and trash disposal
    - ii. minimising the use of fertiliser
    - iii. practicing safe and responsible diving and snorkeling
    - iv. using eco-friendly modes of transport
    - v. PSIDS strongly promoting the sales of mineral sunscreen as a way of protecting the coral reefs;
  - d) working with nations towards cutting down on overfishing and the use of poisons and cyanide for the fishing of coral dwelling creatures
  - e) identifying suitable locations for coral rehabilitation;
  - f) promotes the education of fishermen previously reliant on destructive fishing for new fishing techniques, such as static nets and line fishing by local fishing enforcement officials,
5. Further urges larger, more developed nations to provide assistance to the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) in the form of infrastructure and monetary aid in order to:
- a) limit the impacts of natural disasters such as tropical cyclones, flooding, and storm surges by building Disaster Management Infrastructure such as but not limited to:
    - i. protection approaches such as hard structural solutions like sea walls, revetments, and armour units
    - ii. accommodation approaches such as cyclone and flood-proofing buildings, hazard and risk mapping community education, and creating an evacuation plan
    - iii. retreat approaches such as government land acquisition, and reductions of subsidies and incentives for development in vulnerable areas to limit development;
  - b) restore land that has been eroded away in areas away from coral through land reclamation, carried out by methods such as The Dry Method, Hydraulic Reclamation Method, Hydraulic Filling, Sand Spreading, pumping inside the Bunds, creating strong shelters and disaster management centers in the mainland of the island to which funds and resources are allocated;
6. Further encourages collaboration between the PIF, the World Health Organization (WHO), and NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders and CARE to improve the response of the health sector in

all vulnerable regions by:

- a) identifying the most common diseases arising due to the rising sea levels and the areas most susceptible to them in order to arrange the necessary resources
- b) the provision of medical facilities and trained medical practitioners that includes:
  - i. the building of healthcare centers with the necessary resources to provide immediate medical aid
  - ii. the building of rehabilitation centers that include sessions to support and restore the mental health of those suffering traumatic experiences due to the various disasters that strike the region
  - iii. the training of local people interested in medicine in order to increase manpower while simultaneously creating employment
  - iv. conducting routine pest control and environmental clean-ups to prevent the spread of new diseases;
- c) Subsidizing food and sanitary products in order to prevent malnutrition, the acquisition of disease, and to maintain high levels of hygiene

7. Calls for the creation of the United Sovereignities against Sea Rise (USSR) that would:

- a) research on how to battle the rising of sea level with information to be shared by every country
- b) take action in every way deemed fit by the USSR leader
- c) appoint a leader every 5 years to guide the fight against sea level rise.